

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 HA-02 IO-06 NSC-05 INR-05  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 PRS-01 PM-03 SP-02 /045 W  
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R 160830Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6131  
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
CINCPAC  
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 0631

LIMDIS

BANGKOK PASS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY OAKLEY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, SHUM, ID

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR'S REPORT ON SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR

1. SUMMARY: NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR ROGER PEREN, WHO JUST  
RETURNED FROM A FIVE-DAY VISIT TO EAST TIMOR, TOLD ME JANUARY 12-  
THAT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE AREA IS AT A LOW LEVEL BUT HE BELIEVES  
THE SMALL BUT DEDICATED GROUP OF GUERRILLAS ARE WELL ENTRENCHED  
IN DIFFICULT TERRAIN AND THAT THE FIGHTING WILL CONTINUE FOR  
SEVERAL YEARS. HE SEES FRETILIN COMING INCREASINGLY UNDER  
COMMUNIST CONTROL. HE FOUND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INDONESIANS  
AND EAST TIMORESE GOOD AND SAID FORMER FRETILIN SUPPORTERS WHO  
ARE RALLYING TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN FAIRLY LARGE NUMBERS  
ARE NOT VICTIMIZED BUT ARE ASSISTED IN RESETTLEMENT. ASKED

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WHAT THE EAST TIMORESE THOUGHT ABOUT INTEGRATION INTO  
INDONESIA, PEREN SAID THEY ARE GENERALLY DISILLUSIONED WITH  
FRETILIN AND "ARE VOTING WITH THEIR FEET".

2. INTRODUCTION: ROGER PEREN, NEW ZEALAND'S AMBASSADOR TO  
INDONESIA, HAS JUST COMPLETED A FIVE-DAY VISIT TO EAST TIMOR  
AS THE FIRST JAKARTA-BASED AMBASSADOR TO VISIT THE AREA.

HE BRIEFED ME ON THE VISIT ON JANUARY 12. FOLLOWING A SCHEDULE ARRANGED BY THE INDONESIANS, PEREN MADE TWO CIRCULAR SWEEPS THROUGH EAST TIMOR, ONE IN THE FAR EASTERN END OF THE ISLAND AND THE OTHER FROM DILI TO THE SOUTH COAST AND BACK BY ANOTHER ROUTE. THOUGH HE WAS NOT SHOWN EVERYTHING, HE SAW A GREAT DEAL OF THE COUNTRY AND TALKED WITH MANY PEOPLE. HE BELIEVES HE SUCCEEDED IN GETTING A GOOD ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION. THE ONLY GROUP HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE GOI. ACCORDING TO PEREN, WAS THE CATHOLIC HIERARACHY, AND HE BELIEVES THIS MAY BE AT LEAST PARTLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE LOST INFLUENCE WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE PORTUGUESE. WHILE IT WAS NECESSARY FOR HIM IN MANY CASES TO USE INTERPRETERS, HE OFTEN PICKED A LOCAL INTERPRETER FROM THE GROUP WITH WHICH HE WAS TALKING, THUS LESSENING DEPENDENCE OF HIS GOI ESCORT. PEREN FELT THE TRIP WAS WELL HANDLED BY THE INDONESIANS; THERE WERE NO BOGUS "SPONTANEOUS DEMONSTRATIONS" OF SUPPORT FOR THE GOI AND NO FLAG-WAVING CHILDREN ALONG THE ROUTE.

3. THE GOI POSITION: PEREN SAID THE MAJOR CENTERS OF POPULATION ARE FIRMLY UNDER CONTROL OF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION. RELATIONS BETWEEN INDONESIANS AND EAST TIMORESE SEEM GOOD. HE WAS TOLD BY THE INDONESIANS DURING THE VISIT THAT THE FIGHTING COULD PROBABLY NOT BE ENDED UNTIL MID-1979. HE PERSONALLY BELIEVES THAT JOB WILL TAKE UP TO A YEAR LONGER GIVEN THE DEDICATION OF THE GUERRILLAS AND THE DIFFICULT TERRAIN. NONETHELESS, HE BELIEVES POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE INDONESIAN SECRET

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ADMINISTRATION IS GROWING. MANY TIMORESE WHO ORIGINALLY OPPOSED THE GOI, NOT WANTING TO "EXCHANGE ONE MASTER FOR ANOTHER", ARE NOW COMING OVER TO THE INDONESIAN SIDE. THEY SEE NO FUTURE WITH FRETELIN AND BELIEVE THAT ORGANIZATION IS COMING TOO STRONGLY UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL. HE WAS TOLD AND HAS NO REASON TO DISPUTE THAT 60,000 PEOPLE RALLIED TO THE ADMINISTRATION DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS.

4. FRETELIN: PEREN BELIEVES THAT SIGNIFICANT FRETELIN SUPPORT IS LIMITED TO 250 TO 300 HARD CORE GUERRILLAS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN AREAS OF THE PROVINCE. THEY FUNCTION, HE SAID, MUCH LIKE THE CT DID IN MALAYA. SINCE THEY HAVE WEAPONS, FRETELIN CONTROLS IN VARYING DEGREES AN ESTIMATED 50,000 PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE INTERIOR AREAS IN WHICH THEY OPERATE. THIS NUMBER IS, HOWEVER, GRADUALLY DECLINING THROUGH DEFECTIONS. DESPITE THEIR SMALL NUMBERS, THE HARD CORE FRETELIN GROUP KEEPS GOING BECAUSE THEY ARE YOUNG AND DEDICATED. FRETELIN IS ALSO HELPED BY THE FACT THAT GOI INTELLIGENCE IS PROBABLY INADEQUATE, AND THE INDONESIAN ARMED FORCES ARE UNABLE TO FIND THE SMALL GUERRILLA BANDS. AS A RESULT, THERE ARE FEW MILITARY CLASHES BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS. PEREN WAS TOLD BY INDONESIAN MILITARY COMMANDER BRIGGEN

DADING KALUBIAN THAT THER IS NO RESUPPLY OF WEAPONS FOR  
FRETILIN FROM OUTSIDE. PEREN SAID AUSTRALIAN SHARES THIS VIEW.  
FRETILIN IS THUS ABLE, IN THE TRADITIONAL GUERRILLA MANNER,  
TO LIVE OFF THE COUNTRYSIDE.

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5. CIVIL ADMINISTRATION: PEREN SAID HE HEARD A GREAT DEAL OF  
TALK AMONG THE INDONESIAN ABOUT THE NEED TO "GET THE CIVIL  
GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTION RIGHT". THERE ARE NOW THIRTY TO FORTH  
INDONESIAN CIVIL ADVISERS WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THEY  
HAVE REPLACED PORTUGUESE. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FILL THESE  
POSITIONS WITH LOCAL INHABITANTS IN VIEW OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF  
EDUCATED OR SKILLED MANAGERS. PEREN SAID THE PORTUGUESE DID  
NOT LEAVE MUCH BEHIND AND HAD DONE VIRTUALLY NOTHING TO DEVELOP  
THE AREA. LIVING CONDITIONS IN EAST TIMOR ARE TERRIBLE-THE WORST  
HE HAS SEEN IN INDONESIAN EXCEPT FOR ONE AREA OF IRIAN JAYA.  
INDONESIAN HOPES DURING THE THIRD FIVE YEAR PLAN TO BRING EAST  
TIMOR UP TO THE LEVEL OF THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. GIVEN THE  
LACK OF RESOURCES, PEREN SAID, THIS WILL BE DIFFICULT.

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6. MILITARY ORGANIZATION: PEREN SAID HE DID NOT SEE INDONESIAN ARMY BATTALIONS, BUT HE BELIEVES THERE ARE TWENTY-ONE IN THE REGION (RATHER THAN THE FIFTEEN CLAIMED BY GENERAL MURDANI). HE DID, HOWEVER, SEE A NUMBER OF THE 7,000 LOCALLY RECRUITED HOME GUARDS (HANSIP) WHO PROTECT THE VARIOUS TOWNS AND VILLAGES. SOMEWHAT LESS THAN 1,000 INDONESIAN OFFICERS AND NCO'S ARE TRAINING THESE FORCES. PEREN SAID THEY SEEMED WELL ORGANIZED AND RELATIVELY EFFECTIVE, HE CONCLUDED THAT THE INDONESIAN ARMED FORCES FACED A TOUGH FIGHT. MUCH OF THE TERRAIN IS "GOOD FOR GUERRILLA ACTIVITY BUT NOT MUCH ELSE". THE ONLY REAL ADVANTAGE HE SAW FOR THE INDONESIAN WAS THAT FRETILIN HAD NO SAFEHAVEN SINCE EAST TIMOR IS LARGELY SURROUNDED BY WATER. HE SAW NO EVIDENCE, BUT AGREED THAT THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONCEALED FROM HIM, THAT PREPARATIONS ARE BEING MADE FOR MAJOR MILITARY SWEEP. HE BELIEVES THE INDONESIAN ARMY WILL TRY DURING THIS YEAR TO MARROW THE DEFENSE PERIMETER BUT THAT THEY COULD NOT END THE FIGHTING, EVEN BY THEIR TARGET DATE OF MID-1979.

7. REFUGEES: PEREN SAID HE SAW NO EVIDENCE THAT THE MORE THAN 60,000 FORMER FRETILIN SUPPORTERS WHO DEFECTED TO THE ADMINISTRATION IN RECENT MONTHS ARE IN ANY WAY VICTIMIZED. THERE ARE NO REFUGEE CAMPS, AND THE RALLIERS RETURN TO THEIR OWN LAND AND HOMES OR, IF THEY COME FROM AREAS UNDER FRETILIN CONTROL, GO INTO RESETTLEMENT AREAS WHERE THEY ARE GIVEN TWO HECTARES AND A HOUSE. SOME, HOWEVER, ARE LIVING IN POOR TEMPORARY QUARTERS AWAITING RESETTLEMENT. THE BASIC POLICY IS TO "TREAT THE RALLIERS AS BROTHERS" RATHER THAN TO PUNISH THEM. PEREN SAID HE WAS SURPRISED TO FIND, CONSIDERING INDONESIAN ACTIONS IN OTHER AREAS, THAT THIS IS ACTUALLY WORKING WELL. INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES TOLD HIM CLEARLY THAT THEY DID NOT WANT OUTSIDE HELP IN CARING FOR THE REFUGEES. THEY WANT TO SHOW THAT THEY CAN DO THIS THEMSELVES. PEREN LEFT THE DOOR OPEN BY TELLING THEM THAT HE WAS SURE INTERNATIONAL AID WOULD BE AVAILABLE AT THE

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RIGHT TIME.

8. PEREN'S CONCLUSIONS: PEREN SAID HE FIRMLY BELIEVES ON THE BASIS OF THIS VISIT THAT INTEGRATION IS IRREVERSIBLE. THE SO-CALLED ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN APRIL 1976 WAS NOT SATISFACTORY, BUT PEREN QUESTIONS HOW AN ADEQUATE OPINION POLL COULD BE CONDUCTED IN AN AREA WHICH IS 95 PERCENT ILLITERATE. HE CONCLUDED THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE WERE WILLING TO ACCEPT INDONESIAN CITIZENSHIP. WHICH AT THE VERY LEAST THEY FIND BETTER THAN LIVING UNDER FRETILIN OR CONTINUING THE ROUGH

GUERRILLA LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS. HE SAID WHEN PEOPLE  
ASK HIM WHAT THE TIMORESE THINK OF INTERGRATION, HIS ANSWER IS  
THAT THEY ARE "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET".

9. COMMENT: PEREN HAS REPUTATION OF BEING AN  
OBJECTIVE, PERCEPTIVE AND OFTEN CRITICAL OBSERVER OF GOI PERFORMANCE.  
HIS CONCLUSIONS VARY SIGNIFICANTLY, HOWEVER, FROM THE REPORTS  
OF ANTI-INDONESIAN SENTIMENT WHICH WE HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME  
RECEIVED FROM CATHOLIC CHURCH SOURCES. WHILE THIS MAY BE DUE IN PART  
TO CATHOLIC HIERARCHY'S RESENTMENT OF GOI WHICH PEREN MENTIONS,  
CATHOLIC CLERGY HAVE UNDENIABLY GREATER ACCESS TO INFORMATION  
ON THE AREA. ON BALANCE, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT  
THE GOI IS GAINING SUPPORT OF THE TIMORESE POPULATION BUT NOT  
YET TO THE DEGREE SUGGESTED IN PEREN'S COMMENTS TO ME.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014